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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: BUSH'S KYOTO SPEECH, APEC, BIRD FLU

¶1. Summary: Taiwan dailies gave considerable front or second page coverage on November 17 to U.S. President George W. Bush's speech delivered in Kyoto on Wednesday, in which he lauded Taiwan as a model of freedom for China. Coverage also focused on the pan-Blue legislators' move to slash the Mainland Affairs Council's budget for 2006; a court ruling ordering former President Lee Teng-hui to pay People First Party Chairman James Soong NT\$10 million in compensation for a defamation suit; China's confirmation of its first three human bird flu cases; and local scandals. All major Chinese-language Taiwan newspapers also reported how the Taiwan Presidential Office welcomed Bush's endorsement of Taiwan's democracy, saying it meant a lot to the island that Bush praised Taiwan at the start of his trip to Asia. The centrist "China Times" ran a story on page two saying that prior to Bush's visit to Beijing this coming weekend, a former White House official paid a secret visit to Taiwan and met with President Chen Shui-bian to advise Taiwan not to make any provocative moves now.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" commented on Bush's speech, saying that when Bush compared Taiwan to democratic models like Japan and South Korea, he in fact endorsed Taiwan as an independent, sovereign state. An opinion piece in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" discussed the nature of APEC and said that APEC will be hollowed once the East Asia Summit, from which the United States will be completely excluded, really takes shape. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" said Taiwan should take the initiative to propose cooperation within APEC to study and produce vaccines against avian flu. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" also called for international cooperation to curb avian flu. End summary.

¶1. Bush's Kyoto Speech

"Bush Wants China to Learn from Taiwan's Democracy and Freedom. How Could the Pan-Blue Camp Be So Merciless as to Destroy Taiwan's Democracy!"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] commented in an editorial (11/17):

"[U.S. President George W.] Bush delivered a speech in Kyoto Wednesday, lauding Taiwan's democracy, freedom and prosperity and saying Taiwan is a model for China to learn from. .

"It is noteworthy that in a few days, Bush will meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao in Beijing. Bush will ask China to continue implementing its currency reform policy, increase U.S. exports to China, and protect intellectual property rights. Sources said the neo-conservative force in the U.S. hopes that the Bush administration will adopt a tough position toward Beijing with regard to issues like human rights and religious freedom. Bush, on the other hand, hopes to influence China's social transformation via economic and trade development. .

"Bush's speech stressed the value of Taiwan's democracy and clearly pointed out China's totalitarianism. It is particularly pleasing to see that when Bush listed Taiwan, together with Japan and South Korea, as democratic economic models and asked China to play an aggressive role [in this aspect], he has in fact endorsed Taiwan's [status] as a country, an independent sovereign state. ."

¶2. APEC

A) "How Much Can [We] Expect from APEC?"

Wang Chen-yu, a visiting research fellow at Harvard University's Law School, said in an opinion piece in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (11/17):

". Since the nature of APEC is totally different from that of closed regional organizations (such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and European Union), most APEC member

nations attend the [annual] meetings with the attitude that it is at least better than nothing. But the United States tends to define the APEC meetings as an important occasion to influence the direction of Asia's economy and trade. As a result, Washington is akin to becoming a leader of APEC, dictating all agenda relevant to the United States while other countries pay only little attention to the meetings. . Some subtle changes, however, have occurred in this situation over the past few years. Given the tight schedule of a series of summit meetings followed by the ASEAN Plus Three and plans to organize free trade [zones], Asian nations have shown a greater interest in establishing closed free trade zones rather than a `tasteless' open regional forum like APEC. .

". If the `East Asia Summit' really takes shape, APEC will become hollowed. More importantly, the United States will be completely excluded from this closed regional organization that ASEAN nations and China are eager to build. Such a development has led the United States to criticize the East Asia Summit recently for being a `black box; all the more, it indicates Washington's anxiety of being marginalized. ."

B) "No More Insults in APEC Meetings"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (11/17):

". The [Taiwan] government should intensify its comprehensives international publicity and dialogue efforts in order to win affirmation in the world community for Taiwan's existence and development and its efforts to realize the values of democracy, freedom, peace, progress and sustainability.

"Hence, we urge our delegation [to APEC] to make positive use of this opportunity, despite the PRC's interference, to manifest Taiwan's existence and potential contribution to the world community and help other delegates and countries to better understand our diligence and friendship.

"Last year, Taiwan was the first to raise the proposal in APEC to intensify research and production of vaccines against infectious diseases and received widespread approval for this initiative. In light of the rising threat of avian influenza in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world, Taiwan should also take the initiative to propose cooperation within APEC to research, develop and produce vaccines and other medicines to deal with avian flu and its possible mutations. ."

13. Bird Flu

"International Cooperation Needed to Curb Bird Flu"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] wrote in an editorial (11/17):

". Encouragingly, Taiwan and the United States are planning to cooperate in a project to develop a vaccine against avian flu, the Council of Agriculture announced during a seminar on Tuesday. This joint effort should be a helpful step to preventing the outbreak of the killer disease on this island. .

". Yesterday U.S. President George W. Bush called on Asia-Pacific leaders to learn from the outbreak of deadly SARS in 2003 and join forces to fight a potential worldwide spread of bird flu. . The remarks are valid and noteworthy. Few countries would be spared if a bird flu pandemic that the WHO warns of occurs. Countries around the globe should make collective efforts to prevent that scenario from becoming reality. Countries may squabble over certain issues, but on a health issue such as the bird flu crisis, all should work closely together as Bush has urged."